

Protracted Meetings Among the Negroes Result of Earthquake in Eighteen Eighty Six

(By H. Jeff Davis)

As a result of the earthquake in 1886, there was an epidemic of protracted meetings among the Negroes. The main one in Waynesboro was at the Negro church down next to the depot, near a great ditch that drained a large part of the town. Beside the church was a graveyard with its tombstones and some tall trees that towered above the building.

Some mischievous white boys, having gotten over their fright, decided to have some fun at the expense of the darkies. They armed themselves with a liberal supply of calcium lights of assorted colors that would burn for some minutes. They each had a sheet in which to wrap at the proper time. One of them, who was to be the angel Gabriel and blow the resurrection horn, took an old fashioned plantation tin bugle about five feet long and climbed to the top of a tall sweet gum tree near the rear of the church.

The others arranged themselves at proper points amid the tombstones. Just when the meeting inside had reached fever heat and things were good, high over all and coming out of the very heavens, was heard Gabriel's clarion call to the sheeted dead. In prompt response an unearthly light illuminated the silent city of the dead and cast its ghastly glare upon the faces of that assembled congregation, and made even the living to look like the dead.

A darky is none too fond of the dead at any time, but when the wail of Gabriel's trumpet calls the dead from their graves and the living are transformed into ghosts before their very eyes, it was more than they could stand. Too badly frightened to make much outcry, as one man that congregation rose up and left there by way of the windows as well as the doors.

The preachers went out the back window. A few wore a window-sash frame about the neck, like a horse collar until they could shed it for faster travel. A closed door and a gate were opened on the wrong side. The big ditch was breast deep in those who in their mad flight had not even seen it.

Chattanooga, Tenn. Free Press
June 12, 1941

Boy Injured in Bed As He Stays Home To Dodge 13th Jinx

TUSKEGEE, Ala., June 13.—Now you can never convince Erastus Jubus that Friday the 13th doesn't bring bad luck, for he knows what happened to him this morning.

When he woke today, Erastus, a young colored Tuskegee sawmill worker, groaned when he remembered it was Friday the 13th, so he told his roommate he felt sick, and to please bring his breakfast. Confidentially, he went on to say that he just knew that Friday the 13th jinx would get him if he left the room, and he was going to prevent it by staying in bed. So his roommate, "Pop" Sutters, brought his breakfast and set off to work with a message to the boss that Erastus was sick.

But just a few minutes after his roommate left, a big piece of plaster on the ceiling above Erastus' bed fell and hit him on the head and face, making treatment by a doctor necessary.

"I told Pop that Friday the 13th was unlucky," the victim moaned triumphantly while the doctor was fixing him up.

Telegraph
Macon, Georgia

'Mystics' Arrested In Voodoo Death

MAR 29 1941
By DUDLEY SMITH JR.

A little Negro woman who stabbed another Negress to death yesterday to rid herself of a "spell," unfolded a tale of black magic and witchcraft to county officers which resulted in the arrests of two local "fortune tellers."

The woman, Beulah Brown, 30, of 618 Crisp street, plunged a knife into the heart of Negress told officers. "It was a fellow worker at the Southern from a spell Mary put on me. I Crate and Veneer Company because, she told county officers take it off, but she said he didn't know anything about it. I told the woman, Mary Calhoun, 1633 Broadway, refused to remove a her again today [Friday] and she "spell" she had placed on her. still said she didn't do it but I know she did."

Beulah said she learned of the The injured Negress died a few spell through a fortune teller, a minutes after she arrived at the Madame Deas, who told her only Macon hospital. She had been that a woman named "Mary" had stabbed more than 10 times. bewitched her. Madame Deas, so Beulah admitted that she had been under treatment for syphilis for the past year. Solicitor Long and the officers attributed the gave her potions to ward off the pains and "breaking out" complained of to the disease.

HARALSON ARRESTED

Madame Deas became Peggy Pearl Harris, attractive young brunette, when she was arrested on a warrant issued by City Court Solicitor Oscar L. Long charging her with practicing medicine without a license.

The Negress said she was acting on the information Madame Deas gave her when she charged Mary Calhoun with bewitching her. MAR 29 1941

Also arrested on information from the Negress was "Professor" Ozie Haralson, 111 Henry street, whom the Negress said also prescribed potions to combat the evil force of the "spell." He was charged with the same offense docketed against "Madame Deas."

Haralson later was released on \$5,000 bond but the woman had been unable to furnish bail last night.

The Brown Negress told of suffering from the "spell" for 10 years before being told the Calhoun woman was responsible for it. MAR 29 1941

STABBED TEN TIMES

"I had pains in my joints and side and all over and I had a breaking out on my head," the

Coroner Lester H. Chapman will hold an inquest into the slaying, probably today.

Montgomery, Ala. Journal
May 9, 1941

More Nature Notes

Plantation negroes regard a frizzled chicken in the yard as a sign of good luck. But any kind of chicken in most plantation negroes' backyards is out of luck...It is said that fleas in the dog yard can be eliminated by building a fire at night. Fleas are like moths to the extent that they will jump into the fire to see what it is all about...An ingenious fisherman of the Alabama Black Belt has taken the advice of the conservation department to feed the fish in his pond, but has contrived a lazy man's way to do it. He has rigged up an electric light bulb just above the center of the pond. Night bugs by the thousands are drawn to the light, drop into the water, and are nabbed by the alert fish.

HIS TYPE RARE

While a few undertaking establishments boast negro janitors, there are hundreds of others which cannot lure one inside their buildings.

An undertaker in Atlanta has a negro janitor that has been given deferment by a draft board because he is "essential in his civilian occupation." The grounds, as reported in a news dispatch, were: "His employer states that it is difficult to obtain a man of his race to work in the proximity of dead bodies because of the superstitious fear general to the negro race."

Advertiser Montgomery, Ala. New Orleans Voodoo Doctor's Practitioner Is Arrested Here

By HIBAM J. HERBERT

A shabby, smelly room on Montgomery's Monroe Street could just as easily have been a hatched hut in the jungles of Haiti, and the "witch woman" who practiced her voodoo rites over a smelly brew could have readily been a sorceress of that Island of Black Magic.

But, if a prominent Montgomery family had not become alarmed over the sudden and mysterious illness of their servant, voodoo doctor would have gotten a strange hold on Montgomery negroes and tragedy resulted. As it is, the servant is in serious condition solely as the result of the terrifying powers conjured by the New Orleans witch.

Nevertheless, the voodoo spell so strongly invoked that, although the witch is in the hands of police, Willie Boykin, the negro cook, is still suffering and actually craves the presence of the sorceress.

Discovery of the terror came when the negro announced to her employer that she could no longer live in the quarters provided for her in the back garden, where she had lived contentedly for several years. She would give no explanation, and the family, on South Perry Street, by whom she was employed, was mystified.

Mystery Thickens

The mystery grew denser when the woman sent her employer's chauffeur to draw \$30 from her savings account and took off for a trip to New Orleans. Returning from New Orleans, her health began to fail. Within a few weeks her health had reached the point where a reputable Montgomery physician said she was anemic.

That was when City Detectives Albert Chancellor and W. A. Davis took over and began investigations.

The negro, it seemed, had been avoiding a particular spot of ground in the back garden, and in one bag was 11 cents, in the her daughter disclosed to detectives that the voodoo witch had plucked some hair from her mother's head—although her mother did not know when it had been voodooed into believing was done—and buried it in a bottle in the garden. Her mother "charm" she was forced to buy was told by the voodoo witch if to cure this situation proved near she ever stepped on the spotly disastrous. Each night she where the hair was buried, she burned a candle at each porch would promptly die. That, apparently, accounted for the negro's leaving the servant's quarters and moving in with her sister at 206 Marguerite Street.

Spot On Her Head

Also, a spot about the size of a half-dollar on her head suddenly became bald and sore as well. At the same time a persistent headache set in. At this point the voodoo witch told her it could be cured by going to see the voodoo chief, one A. Rockford Lewis, in New Orleans.

Willie made the trip, was further encouraged by assisting voodoo spirits who mysteriously appeared in the bus station at Mobile, paid over her \$30 and shortly after returning to Montgomery received a package containing a box of salve, a bottle of plain household ammonia and the following note:

"Metholeum salve is find for headache. Sprinkle ammonia all over your house steps and porch." All of this was buried in a box of shavings, but her illness grew worse instead of better.

\$300 For Cure

The local voodoo representative, over a mystic brew, told her it would cost \$300 to buy enough charms to get her well. Willie forked over cash money for various kinds of charms and potions. Using all her ready cash, she began borrowing. Her condition grew so serious she was unable to work, and then came the double fear: Unable to work, and unable to pay the voodoo powers to remove the spell.

Several days ago she borrowed \$5 from her employer and the detectives followed her to the house on Monroe Street, and the arrest was made. They found 18 bottles of vile potions, labeled "poison," bags of powders and a suitcase filled with strange papers.

They went to the victim's house and found two small chamois bags, each containing a tiny bone, a straight pin, a cross, curious roots, gravel, loadstone, pine gum,

and in one bag was 11 cents, in the other 13 cents. These were "charms" designed to help in the cure.

It developed that the negro also had been voodooed into believing she was to have a child, and the she was forced to buy prepared concoctions as regularly

as the clock.

Victim Still Afraid

Although detectives took into custody a negro woman, Anna Bell Burch, the voodooed victim still was afraid to talk for fear the New Orleans voodoo powers would come to Montgomery after her.

In the seizure at the victim's quarters was an obviously faked telegram that had arrived without benefit of delivery boy:

"Wire money by Western Union. Telegraph only. Don't mail money. Telegram it to me. If you don't have any Western Union Telegram Office in your country or small town in which you live in go to a town near you where it is a Western Union Telegram Company and send money."

The "telegram," cleverly, was not signed, but the sender's name and address were above the message: "A. Rockford Lewis, 5106 Royal Street, Telephone Crescent 2990, New Orleans, La." Apparently, all precautions were being taken to keep all transactions out of the U. S. mails.

Meanwhile, the victim of the voodoo sorceress is still in serious condition. Anna Bell Burch told the court she would leave Montgomery if they'd let her. This was granted, except the added provision that she must serve 10 days at hard labor.

But the powers of voodoo seem to prevail even yet, for, when detectives were ready to pounce on the New Orleans head of what was believed to be a ring, they were suddenly called off the case. The entire matter, reportedly, has been dropped, and the woman who, allegedly, nearly caused the death of a Montgomery servant is penalized by only ten days at hard labor.

Detectives were of the opinion that the voodoo woman was working her spells on other negroes, and that instances equally as serious would have been uncovered had they been permitted to continue with their investigations.

Dothan, Ala. Eagle
September 23, 1941

Those Lights Again

The "northern lights" of last Thursday night did not go completely unnoticed in the Wiregrass as reports now trickling in to The Eagle assure us.

The phenomenon produced the same results here as elsewhere—leaving some folks in wonderment, others idly curious and still others a teeny bit frightened for the moment.

The lights were seen in various parts of the county by residents who happened to be sitting on their porches or out for a stroll. In the Brannon Stand section the display was first attributed to reflections from the Army airbase.

In Dothan, the only excitement reported was on Acid Plant Hill, Negro section in the northeastern part of town. In this section at least one Negro clambered to the roof of his house for a better view of what he thought was a hum-dinger of a fire.

A few prayers were also reported sent up by Acid Plant Hill residents who sheepishly admitted later they thought the world was coming to an end. It was in this same section that a rumor was spread that Hitler had at least reached the vicinity of the Atlantic coast.

If one is to judge by the scarcity of reports concerning the aurora borealis, it seems that Dothan folks don't pay much attention to such displays or else most of them are safely tucked in bed where they don't have an opportunity to witness such phenomena.

Our own authorities on such matters, however, assure us that the Wiregrass did not get a complete view of the aurora borealis because only a part of the display was visible this far south of Montgomery.

This fact may account for the rare appearance of the northern light going almost unnoticed by Wiregrass folks.